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181 829 177 Russia knew nothing of Feudalism. She remained aloof from the intellectual current which began with Scholasticism and ended with scientific investigation. She was untouched by the Reformation. Whenever she entered into conflict with the Holy See, it was simply as a foreign power.

In short, Russia did not belong to the European family. If she was connected with it, said Danilevsky, it was by adoption, in the manner of a wild stock, on which an exotic branch has been grafted.

• 781 829 771 But had not religion, at least, engendered a spiritual solidarity between her and the West? Was not Orthodoxy a disruption of the Christian community and had not six centuries of Œcumenism forged indissoluble bonds between the Germano-Roman and the Slavo-Greek worlds?

No, replied Danilevsky. The Western Church was the triumph of Rationalism, differentiated by a positive sign among the Catholics, a negative one among the Protestants. Rome sacrificed internal to external unity, the Reformation sacrificed true liberty to the idea of external liberty. The Eastern Church was neither a system nor a hardened doctrine; it was all love and renunciation. Much more than dogmatic opposition was involved—these were two concepts of the spiritual life which were poles apart. That explained why the Orthodox Christians had come to regard Islam as the involuntary and unwitting saviour of Slavism. By tolerating independent churches under her sway, Islam protected them against the assimilating or unifying ascendency of Latin Catholicism. A Patriarch of Constantinople had said that *Providence had chosen the Osmanlis to defend Orthodoxy against the Western heresy.*

186* 829 So that Russia, according to Danilevsky, saw in Europe nothing to give her a feeling of historical or spiritual solidarity. Such was, moreover, the point of view of the great Russian novelist, Dostoievsky; to show oneself a true Russian was, for him, *to place oneself on the battleground of all European hostilities.* It was to constitute a unity, not *in* Europe, but opposed to it.

The thesis of the biologist met that of the novelist. A harmful policy (said Danilevsky in his turn), during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, associated Russia with the European balance of power. Now this balance of power affected only the

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781 A mere glance at such a history helps the understanding of much that is characteristic of Orthodoxy. It is small matter for wonder if the Orthodox are in some ways rigid, if they are conservative and inspired by the conviction that the Faith is above all something to be guarded, if their attitude is defensive with perhaps at times a nuance of what some would call an inferiority complex. History has sentenced them to cherish their faith in the face of opposition, not even Russia has been immune in modern times, and to learn to resist the lure of a material well-being to be gained by abandoning it. As a reward they have their profound sense of the reality of the unseen spiritual world, and their developed genius for corporate worship. Their experience of this world has confirmed their belief that the choice of the monk and hermit who renounce it is the highest expression of the Christian life. They look less for justice in this life than for fortitude to bear injustice and for reverence towards those who suffer, and this blends well with the temperamental melancholy of the Slav. In the beauty and truth of the unseen world they find their consolation, and also their strength, for in the resurrection of Christ they see the guarantee that in the end that world of the Spirit will redeem and transfigure not only human life but the whole cosmos.

1 [See p. 17 of text in cat. 116 --A]

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icons of Feasts of the Church, often of the Twelve Great Festivals of Orthodoxy.[1] In the fourth tier are Old Testament Prophets including King David and King Solomon. Above this may be another row depicting the Patriarchs and perhaps still another filled with Cherubim and Seraphim. The scheme is not rigidly adhered to in detail, but the whole represents all creation, representatives of the Old and the New Covenants grouped in praise and intercession around the Deesis.

To the Orthodox worshipper the iconostas symbolizes the meeting place of heaven and earth: it marks the distinction and at the same time the union, of the world of divine truth and beauty represented by the sanctuary, and this imperfect world of human life symbolized by the rest of the church. As he stands in worship he contemplates this representation of all creation united in a symphony of praise and adoration. And the great doors in the centre of the iconostas mark the place where his worship reaches its climax in the solemn act of Communion. But the whole interior of the church is adorned with images in fresco or mosaic of saints and heroes of the Orthodox Faith. The triumph over iconoclasm was to lead in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to an outburst of elaborate iconography which characterized what used to be known as the "*Second Golden Age*" of Byzantine art and which made the walls of their churches a picture book in which the Orthodox found a perpetual reminder of their creed. On the walls of the narthex and the nave are depicted the great festivals of the Church, and series of ascetics, confessors, martyrs, doctors and prelates. In the half dome over the apse of the sanctuary is the Theotókos—the God-bearer seated with her Child in her arms, while high up in the great dome this whole iconographic proclamation of belief is crowned by the image of Christ, the rainbow-throned Almighty surrounded by cherubim and seraphim.

Within this building the principal act of worship is the Liturgy, the name which the Orthodox give to the service

[1] These are (not counting Easter, which is in a class by itself): Christmas, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Ascension Day, Whit Sunday, Transfiguration, Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and the following feasts of Our Lady: Nativity, Purification, the Annunciation, Presentation in the Temple, and the Falling Asleep.

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It is not a simple matter for a Westerner to grasp what the icon means to the Orthodox and the part it plays in his religious life. Perhaps it can be fully understood only from within Orthodoxy as part of Orthodox experience. But certain distinctions can be drawn. All Christians presumably agree that a picture of a sacred person or event has value and legitimate use as a means of teaching. But the icon is more than that. It is more also than a picture of a loved person, by looking upon which memory is refreshed and devotion stimulated. Neither of these parallels would account for the degree of veneration which is paid to the icons. It is the same veneration as the Orthodox pay to the Book of the Gospels and the Cross. On the other hand it is a lower degree of veneration than that which is given to the consecrated elements of the Eucharist. In the latter case worship is rendered to Christ Himself actually present. In an icon of Christ, He is not conceived as present in the same way as that. Yet there is a link between the actual material icon, and the person it represents. In the devout contemplation of an icon one is brought in some sense into the presence of the original of which it is a painting. The link is in the Orthodox view analogous to the connection between a sacred relic and the saint from which the relic is derived. With this difference, that the connection between the relic and the saint, assuming it to exist in fact, might be called a natural link, whereas the connection between the icon and its original is created by the Church. It is established by the action of blessing the icon. An icon is not, so to speak, fully an icon until it has been blessed. Then it becomes a link between the human and the divine, through it the other world comes into touch with the worshipper.

Standing before it with the right disposition of heart and mind, one is really in touch with, in the presence of, the subject which the icon represents. "According to Orthodox belief an icon is a place of the Gracious Presence. It is the place of an *appearance* of Christ, of the Virgin, of the saints, of all those represented by the icon, and hence it serves as a place for prayer to them." "By the blessing of the icon of Christ, a mystical meeting of the faithful and Christ is made possible."[1]

[1] S. Bulgakov: *The Orthodox Church*, p. 162 f., London, 1935.

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No wonder then that the icons are so highly revered, that famous icons are carried in procession through the streets, or brought by the clergy to the bedside of the sick.

So potent is the link between the icon and its prototype that many icons are regarded as "wonder-working icons" In fact the wonder-working icon is the icon *par excellence*. The belief that such icons are endowed with miraculous power has given rise to numberless legends.[1] They may tell of an icon's being the means of curing sickness and other ills which flesh is heir to, of bringing material good fortune to the devout believer, of securing the icon's own safety when menaced by danger, of rewarding its veneration and even resenting and punishing insult, physical injury and neglect, but mercifully restoring the sinner after his repentance. Not all of this is official Orthodox teaching: much of it belongs to the sphere of popular religion, where it may go to fantastic lengths.[2]

Presumably the orthodox interpretation of such happenings is that at the intercession of the saint depicted on the icon, God grants the request of the petitioner who prayed before it. In the popular mind such an explanation may readily slide into the conception that the saint is the benefactor because this particular picture of him was venerated, and that again may easily slip into the feeling that it is the actual icon itself which has worked the miracle or conferred the blessing.

There exist a relatively large number of pictures of the Blessed Virgin which tradition attributes to St. Luke, and these are treated with deep reverence. But a place of their own in the heart of the Orthodox believer belongs to the "Icons not made with Hands". These are icons the originals of which are believed to have come into existence without human agency. Such are the Vernicle, the legend of which is well known in the West also; and an image of Christ imprinted upon a cloth sent to Abgar, King of Edessa, by Christ himself and subsequently brought to Constantinople. This is the most ancient of the "Icons not made with Hands". But there are others, and they, and the copies made of them (though some are said

[1] See R. M. Dawkins for many such connected with the icons of Athos, in *The Monks of Athos*, London, 1936.
[2] Charles Diehl in *Cambridge Mediaval History*, Vol. IV, p. 6.

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CHAPTER XI

ORTHODOXY AND THE PEOPLE

THERE is evidence that in Russia the year 1948 was marked by widespread religious revival. It is striking and even startling. It tells of the people flocking back to their Church; of very great numbers crowding the churches of Moscow to make their communions during Lent; of physically exhausted priests snatching a few hours' sleep without leaving church, so many were the people who came to seek their ministrations.

Even if such reports exaggerated the facts and were only partly true, they draw attention once more to the ineradicably religious nature of the Russians. They suggest that it is to the temper of the Russian folk as a whole that the West must look for the prospect of peace and mutual understanding, and inspire the hope that in the long run the character of the Russian people will make itself felt and say its say.

In dealing with Orthodoxy we are dealing with a different civilization from our own. It is, if we adopt Toynbee's classification, Byzantine whilst ours is Western, and although both are derived from the Greco-Roman civilization which preceded them, the two have their own characteristic and sometimes divergent views of life. It behoves us then to try to understand the Orthodox view of life, and what especially concerns us here is the mainspring of that view of life—for its mainspring is religion, even if that should manifest itself in negative form, as recently in Russia.

Leaving on one side then the official body of doctrine and the questions which confront the hierarchy in their relations with the State and with those who lie outside the confines of Orthodoxy, what does religion mean when it means anything, to the people of the Orthodox Church, to the man behind

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781 the machine, to the worker in the fields, to the housewife and the mother who teaches her children the Orthodox faith?

All generalizations are perilous and break down somewhere. There are marked differences between Greek and Slav, and again within the Slavs themselves. For instance, the Southern Slavs have perhaps never been the enthusiastic churchgoers that their cousins the Russians have been.

If we ask in what manner a man is conscious of his religion we shall get different answers. In some religions he is conscious of it in terms of fear. The Western man or woman is probably aware of it primarily in terms of duty, of the claims it makes upon him in respect of conduct. I am talking about its primary impact and his immediate response, if he makes any. Doubtless many other things follow.

But one might perhaps risk the assertion that the Orthodox are conscious of their religion primarily in terms of the reality of the unseen world and the permeation of this world by the other. Orthodoxy is meeting, the meeting of two worlds, the contact of the material and the spiritual and even the penetration of the material by the spiritual.

When the Greek stands in Church, this is what he is aware of and here he finds it symbolized. The space where he stands, before the Iconostas, is this world, behind the Iconostas, is the other world. There they meet and there, as he makes his communion, they meet again not in symbol but in fact, in his own person. The icon which he salutes in reverence, he looks not at, but through, for it is (among other things) a window opening upon the spiritual world.

All this is because God Himself came from the heavenly world and entered the earthly, and what is more, stayed in it. The faith, the doctrinal statements to which all alike, both clergy and laity, adhere so passionately, are but the safeguarding shrine of this commanding truth and all that it implies.

781 This explains the central position which Easter occupies
796 in the spiritual life of Orthodoxy. The Great Service takes place at midnight and it has been frequently described. It is preceded by a procession outside the Church, which represents a fruitless search for the body of Christ. Then follow the joyful announcement "Christ is Risen", and the Easter Liturgy

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to which succeed domestic rejoicings which may last most of the night. For Christ has plunged into the abysses of this world and deeper still, to return with the new life of restorative power which shall claim not only the hearts of men but the whole cosmos for light and truth. Fedotov[1] draws attention to the figure of Cosmos in Greek icons which represent the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Apostles are grouped around Our Lady in the upper room and the flickering tongues of fire play upon the head of each, and there is another figure in the picture who also shares in the out-pouring of the Spirit. It is "King Cosmos", a crowned and bearded man who is apparently coming up from below, out of the earth.

But it is expressed and preserved in other more homely and intimate ways, and the Church's touch upon Nature is repeated as the year unfolds. New mown hay, just as it is with the flowers that fell with it, is brought in armfuls and strewn on the floor of the church at Whitsuntide, for Pentecost was one of the first of Harvest Festivals. On the Feast of the Transfiguration which means much for Orthodoxy, grapes are blessed and distributed. "As the water is changed by Nature into the blood of the grape," a Serb said to me, "so by a higher power the blood of the grape is changed into the Blood of Christ." Once more that world penetrates this to transfigure and enrich it.

A ceremony to which enthusiastic crowds always flock, and which may be seen in any Orthodox land from the Jordan to the Neva, is the Blessing of the Waters at the Epiphany. It commemorates the Baptism of Christ, but as it has spread from Palestine into the rest of the Orthodox world, so it has widened its significance to include the touch of the other world upon the waters which give life and fruitfulness to the earth. And a charming ceremony it is, best seen perhaps in the cold countries where at that season of the year the rivers are frozen. There great blocks of ice are cut out of the surface, and from them an altar is built, the cross upon which is also fashioned from ice. The vested clergy and their attendants are grouped around and with them the crowds of worshippers and sightseers.

[1] Fedotov: *The Russian Religious Mind*, Harvard, 1946, p. 369.

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781 796 The waters are blessed by dipping the cross into them with the appropriate prayers. At the Jordan, multitudes of the excited people plunge into the newly blessed river, and even in cold climates there are hardy enthusiasts who will leap through the hole in the ice.[1]

781 All this and much more is the happy side of the realization that the unseen world of light and life enters into this other dark gross world of sin and suffering. But there is another aspect of it which finds expression in what is a characteristic cry of Orthodoxy—"*Lord have mercy.*"

Toynbee has written[2] that one element in Russia's inheritance from Byzantium is the conviction that Byzantium, and then Russia is always right. In matters of State policy, both secular and ecclesiastical, this may well be so. But there is a sense in which the Orthodox has the conviction that he is always wrong. Not only is he aware of his failures and shortcomings in his relations with his fellows, but he expresses it. A Russian in saying "good-bye" to a friend may use a word which equally well means "forgive". If he is a devout person, he may seek his acquaintances and ask their forgiveness, not necessarily with any specific wrongdoing in his mind, on solemn occasions, as, for instance, when he intends to make his communion. A vivid sense of man's need of the divine compassion of forgiveness is woven into the very fabric of Orthodox religion. The words "Lord have mercy" are constantly on the lips of the Orthodox and they are repeated, over and over again in the course of worship.

781 796 The scene may be in a cathedral church on September 14, the Festival of the Exaltation of the Cross. A platform has been erected in the centre of the church, and upon this a group of men stand. They hold in their hands a huge and resplendent cross. Very slowly, by almost imperceptible degrees they raise it, holding it in a vertical position, and lifting it higher and higher, until they can reach no further. The cross remains for a moment, poised at its highest elevation, above the heads of the bearers, above the watching eyes of the

[1] In Greece a cross is thrown into the sea with a ribbon attached by which it is retrieved. In town churches the ceremony of blessing the water may take place at the font.

[2] *Civilization on Trial*, p. 164 ff., Oxford, 1948.

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vast multitude of worshippers who throng the church on all sides. Then with the same slow deliberation it is gradually lowered again to the ground. During this action a choir is singing, and many of the congregation whispering—"Lord have mercy"—just that one phrase over and over again, beginning softly on a very low note and rising in pitch and increasing in volume until the cross is at its maximum height, when the whole building reverberates with the reiterated appeal which slowly dies away again as the cross descends. Then the whole action is repeated to the same accompaniment, and more than once. The number of repetitions must run into hundreds. To many Western minds they will doubtless appear "vain repetitions". But the look on the faces of the worshippers will perhaps give pause to the expression of any such sentiment. The dramatic action expresses something very deeply implanted in the religious consciousness of the Orthodox, the feeling of human unworthiness and its need of the divine compassion, the sense of being imprisoned in the dark and crude elements of this world and the appeal for light and liberation.

Closely allied to it is the awareness of a positive value in suffering and humility, even of humiliation. One meets many members of the Orthodox Church whom political events and recent decades have reduced from riches to poverty or from a reasonable degree of material comfort to almost none at all. But very rarely indeed is there any sign of bitterness and resentment in their reaction. The vivid awareness of the other world does much to soften the asperities of this, and that unseen world is peopled by those who have suffered, it is ruled by the Christ Who humbled Himself.

Another scene may illustrate this, the ceremony of the Feet-washing on Maundy Thursday—which again will pack the church to the doors and beyond. A large dais has been erected in the centre and on it are twelve seats in two rows facing each other. Upon each seat is a bishop fully vested. At a certain point in the service, the chief bishop present, who has been conducting it, lays aside his episcopal vestments, girds himself with a towel and takes a basin and water. He ascends the dais and goes to each of the seated bishops in turn,

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kneels in front of him, removes his foot-gear first from one foot, then from the other, and washes and dries his feet. He replaces the socks and shoes and passes on to the next. When he comes to the one who represents St. Peter, the latter makes the protest recorded in St. John's Gospel and his reluctance has to be overborne before his feet are washed. Finally the officiant resumes his vestments and the main service continues its course. How long does all this take? It does not matter, no one minds or even notices how long. It is all done in absolute silence. All that is audible is the breathing of one's immediate neighbours among the tense crowd of worshippers.

Here too is something particularly real to the Orthodox spirit which is an echo of individual experience, or at least of individual aspiration constantly known. Humiliation may even be sought after from religious motives, and exceptionally this may take oddly extreme forms. The bizarre and well-nigh incredible figure whom the Russians call "Yurodivi", which may be translated the "Fool for Christ's sake"[1] could only be found within the Eastern Orthodox world. He may be really deficient mentally, and as such, in the Russian view, under the special protection of God. He may also be the man who in pursuit of humility and in praise of it deliberately assumed a character of foolishness, and courted the jeers of those he met, inviting their mockery as he roamed from village to village—a fantastic figure, but one who has his meed of reverence too, for the grace that he seeks is loved.

The Orthodox has more to remind him of the unseen world than those who dwell in lands in which religion assumes forms that are more austere. Though for centuries under Turkish rule he was deprived of such outward signs of religion, so that at times he was wont to build his church half buried in the ground to aid concealment, yet with the return of freedom he set up his shrines at street corners and along the wayside. Icons are not confined to the churches, they are to be found in the houses, in every room of a devout household. The living-room will have an icon in a position stereotyped by custom, and a visitor will salute it on entering as he greets his host. Especially in Russia of pre-revolution days, icons were

[1] See 1 Corinthians iv, 10.

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The collapse of humanism and the breakdown of liberalism under the impact of the great wars which have characterized the twentieth century have left a frightening blank in men's minds, and in this state of affairs Orthodoxy has its word to say.

The Greek's own name for their Church is "Orthodox"—they claim to hold unaltered and unimpaired the true doctrine taught and handed on by the Apostles. No less significant is the name by which the Slav members of the same Communion designate it. They call it "Pravoslavny"—the "right-praising" or "right-worshipping" Church. To the Orthodox religion is primarily—though not, of course, solely—belief expressed in worship. Their worship is dogmatic, the truths of their Faith are repeated in it again and again, it re-echoes with glad assertion of what God has done and revealed of Himself in the Christian Gospel, in the experience of the Church, in the livesof the saints.

At the same time it is all couched in the language of poetry and the Service is always sung. The "aesthetic approach" to religion is often spoken of as characteristic of Orthodoxy. There is a legend which was held to explain how Russia came to adopt the religion of Constantinople. Envoys were sent in various directions to investigate different forms of Christianity. Those who had been sent to Constantinople came back and reported on the worship they had witnessed in Justinian's superb Church of the Holy Wisdom. Never had they seen anything like the beauty of it. "We felt we were in heaven rather than on earth," they said. Their description of all this beauty carried the day. "That is the religion for us," cried the Russians.

The truth of this story is in its symbolism. There is in Orthodoxy a real recognition that beauty is one of the links which bind the earth to its Creator. There is much beauty in Orthodox worship, in its buildings, its vestments, its appointments, its music and the quiet unhurried dignity of its movement. Time is of no account in its symbolic representation of the drama of the Life and Death of Christ, and of little account in the actual passing of the moments as anthem and repeated litany unroll themselves. All this is not to say that the outward expressions of Orthodox worship are always more beautiful than those to be found in the West. That would be to reduce the matter largely to a question of individual taste. And,

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795 781 indeed, ugliness is to be found in Orthodox churches, as it is elsewhere, though perhaps not quite so often; ugliness as blatant as that polished alabaster and those brazen whatnots which make us wince in many a Victorian church.

But the phrase "aesthetic approach" must not be taken in too narrow a sense. The "aesthetic approach" of Orthodoxy is not only *through* beauty but also *in* beauty, and it involves the reception *of* beauty. It is the sense of the beauty of the unseen world, which is reflected in this world, which dominates it. The Orthodox feeling for religion is a vital awareness of the Resurrection of Christ as a source of salving, reinvigorating power which is to rescue and transform the whole Cosmos. Its goal is the rescue of all creation from corruption, the transfiguration of the Cosmos, the restoration of its original beauty, as well as of its pristine goodness. Thus the icon, for instance, is not only a human attempt to achieve beauty and offer it in the service of God. It is much more a scrap of the material world which has been rescued from corruption and made a vehicle by which the unseen world comes into touch with men and in which the divine beauty dwells.

Thus in the flux and confusion of the modern world where men are groping for new certainties amid the ruins of bygone stabilities, Orthodoxy proclaims a definite body of beliefs anchored in historical facts, and expresses that belief in worship. It is, therefore, conscious of a mission to the world. It is aware of its Orthodox life as a cleansing, restoring and transfiguring agency in a world which "lies in evil".

It may with justice be said that for long periods that sense of mission has lain dormant. Or at least that owing largely to the political environment in which the Orthodox Church was set and to which its hierarchy has too often been submissive, the sense of mission has failed to find active expression. But it was never dead, and from time to time it awakes and demands new outlets and new methods of presenting Orthodoxy to the world as new circumstances arise and the conscience of the Church is quickened to meet them.

A notable example is the Zoe Movement in Greece which was founded in 1907 and came into public notice with the appearance of its periodical *Zoe* a few years later. The move-

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ment originated in a brotherhood, the members of which took no permanent vows and had no rigid rule. But they lived in common; the majority of them were laymen, and they were trained theologians. They were an unofficial independent body and as such had to meet some opposition at first. Their purpose was first to live the Orthodox life themselves, and then to bring it home to the masses of the people in Greece. The members of the Zoe Brotherhood were teachers, they fostered the revival of preaching and set up a press for the printing of cheap books of religious instruction and devotion. (Not so very long before this, according to the former Archbishop of Corinth, nine-tenths of the Greek parochial clergy were incapable of writing their own names.)[1] They laid great stress upon Confession, and they organized Sunday schools. Their efforts met with much success and the response of the people was visible and striking.

A rather different illustration of the recuperative strength of Orthodoxy is afforded by the action of the Russian Church in the period between the two revolutions of 1917. In August and September of that year, in spite of the condition of civil disorder, the Council of the Russian Church met in Moscow and set itself vigorously to the task of reform. The former Holy Synod abolished itself, and the Patriarchate was restored. The Church turned to the reorganization of its own government in view of the changes which had taken place in civic life. An extensive programme of work was undertaken by the Council in its 170 sittings, and the fact that much of it was rendered ineffective by subsequent developments in the relations of Church and State should not be allowed to disguise the inherent vigour and the faith in Orthodoxy which the Council revealed.[1]

The remarkable cohesive strength in the Orthodox Communion is a fact to be noted. Since the time of the breakaway of the Monophysites described in Chapter II, the Orthodox world has remained one united family of Churches, in spite of temporary estrangements and quarrels. They are held together by no monarchical system of government, but,

[1] See *The Christian East*, July, 1937, and December, 1937.
[1] See an account of this period by a Russian writer in the Sixth Report of *The Anglican and Eastern Churches Association*, 1921.

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795 781 according to their own account, by community of faith and love. In this respect their life is in striking contrast with the fissiparous tendencies displayed by the West. The Orthodox Church includes men of different races and languages, they are frankly national in outlook, they worship in the language of the people, not in a common and liturgical tongue. There are marked divergencies of temperament, especially between Greek and Slav which run like an undercurrent beneath the surface of their history and threaten disruption, as much now as ever. Yet in spite of all this the Orthodox Communion holds together and retains its identity. The case of Bulgaria serves but to underline the fact. For the schism which occurred in 1871 between Constantinople and the Bulgarian Church, precisely on the grounds of what the former regarded as the excessive nationalism of the latter, has now at length been healed, and Bulgaria is once more restored to the full communion of Orthodoxy. This unity in diversity which maintains itself in the face of so many factors which might make for disintegration, and which owes its existence to no coercive principle but to bonds which are intangible and belong to the moral and spiritual sphere, is an impressive fact of which a disordered world may well take note.

795 659 If the life of the Orthodox Church in past centuries has been conspicuously defensive, a rôle of guardianship of its faith and a willingness to suffer in its defence, the twentieth century has revealed the fact that such a life has not ceased to be the vocation of Orthodoxy. The geographical situation of the Orthodox peoples in Eastern Europe places them in a peculiarly exposed position in the conflict which atheistic Communism wages with all forms of religion. This conflict is something new in the modern world. The Christian creed and way of life have been rejected before by individual people or small groups. Alternative creeds have been proposed and accepted, more or less in the seclusion of the study. But the twentieth century has seen the proclamation of rival creeds to the Christian in the market place, publicly, with explicit claims to be superior, supported by argument and backed perhaps by force. Communism, with its definite philosophy of history and its altruistic appeal on behalf of the downtrodden